



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

tions without end, for all sorts of folly and mischief-making, as well as many sorts of good. Who can tell what is to come of it? Let us hope the best. Folly is a suicide, and there is a wise and kind Providence above us all.

ART. IV.—1. *Embassy to the Eastern Courts of Cochinchina, Siam, and Muscat, in the United States Sloop of War Peacock, David Geisinger, Commander, during the Years 1832-3-4.* By EDMUND ROBERTS. New York : Harper & Brothers. 8vo. pp. 432.

2. *A Voyage round the World ; including an Embassy to Muscat and Siam, in 1835-37.* By W. S. W. RUSCHENBERGER, Surgeon in the United States Navy ; Author of "Three Years in the Pacific." Philadelphia : Carey, Lea, & Blanchard. 8vo. pp. 559.

3. *Outline of a Consular Establishment for the United States of America in Eastern Asia.* New York : E. French. pp. 27.

THE second work above named is a brilliant narrative of a circuit of the globe, made by the United States ships Peacock and Enterprise, in 1835-1837. The earth has, it is true, been so often circumnavigated, that the registry of such an achievement has grown somewhat a stale story ; and, after Mr. Reynolds's lively narrative of the "Cruise of the Potomac," Dr. Ruschenberger, following as he did in almost the same track, must have felt an uncommon consciousness of undrained resources, to undertake the writing of another volume upon the same subject. But he has accomplished his task *à merveille*, his narrative being the most readable account of foreign travel that it has lately befallen us to peruse. And it is tropical voyaging too, amidst scenes of sunlight, picturesqueness, luxuriance, and wonder ; all which we sojourners in the cold North are accustomed to include in our imaginations of fairy land ; bestowing, as we are apt to do, all our fancies upon the ever-blooming forests, — the perpetual harvests, — the fruits, the very mention of which produces a

momentary salivation,— while we entirely lose sight of the loathsomeness of the human tenants, the aspic reptiles under the flowers, and the poison of disease that lurks in the air.

The recent missions to the East, as well as the commercial treaties that have been the consequence, are mainly due to the enlightened discernment and mercantile knowledge of the late envoy, Mr. Roberts. He had been, in the earlier years of his life, extensively employed as a commercial factor, throughout the regions eastward of the Cape of Good Hope ; and, from the information and experience thus gained, he inferred, that these sections of the world offered a wide field to American enterprise and profit. He accordingly communicated these views, based upon the minute and accurate observation of years, to his particular friend, the then Secretary of the Navy. In consequence of this influence, it was determined by the government to despatch an expedition to the East, to forward and accomplish the plans proposed by means of a special embassy, having for its object to obtain all accessible information, and to negotiate treaties of amity and commerce with all the Asiatic powers, disposed to enter into such connexion with the government.

Mr. Roberts was appointed the “special agent of the government.” Early in the year 1832, he departed in the United States ship Peacock, Captain Geisinger ; and, visiting Java, Manilla, Canton, Singapore, Siam, and Muscat, he returned in the year 1836, having concluded two treaties, one with the Sultan of Muscat, and the other with the King of Siam. These treaties were ratified by the President and Senate, and Mr. Roberts sailed in a new expedition, (the journal of which is so pleasantly given in the work of Dr. Ruschenberger,) in order to exchange the ratifications, and, if possible, negotiate a treaty with the Emperor of Cochinchina, the overtures of the former mission having failed, mainly through the dilatoriness of Oriental etiquette. On the voyage from Zanzibar to Muscat, the Peacock had the misfortune to strike upon a coral reef in the gulf of Mazeira, with the pleasant prospect of the ship and its gallant armament, together with the diplomatic representative of our country, becoming the prize of Bedouin Arabs. In this sad disaster, the second cutter was equipped with a crew of picked men, and despatched to Muscat to obtain relief, Mr. Roberts vol-

unteering to accompany this perilous boat expedition ; which, after having encountered many of the dangers of Captain Bligh's famed adventure on a similar bottom, arrived in safety at its place of destination. In the Chinese seas, the squadron had to suffer much from the insalubrity of the climate ; and, at Macao, the commander of the enterprise and the American envoy both perished ; the latter, in the language of Dr. Ruschenberger, "having negotiated and concluded the treaties above described, and having proved himself useful to his country, without reaping a full reward."

The time has been, and that not long ago, when we of the "Great West," regarded those adventurous people who sailed from our shores,

" Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambic,"

as richly deserving to be consigned to their self-provoked destiny. Their rashness was too great even for the bold enterprise of insurance corporations ; and, accordingly, they were given over to return or perish, as Providence might best decree. The government washed its hands entirely of the matter, leaving its liege subjects to perish by *Afrit spites* ; or, if they haply escaped so interesting a doom, and freighted home coffee from the Red Sea, or teas and silks from Ormus, the farthest Inde, it was "all aye to Dandie Dinmont" ; the great republican administration, the creature and servant of the people, sitting complacently at home all the while, unconcerned and careless of the great India trade, so long as it could sip its tea out of Chinese cups, lolling meanwhile upon silken ottomans. But we will not do injustice to past administrations. We acquit them of a *total* indifference in this respect, particularly as to the return of the argosy, for which all the harpies of the Custom House were waiting with unbelieving hope ; prepared, in due season, to wrest a golden tribute from those who had braved the stormy spirit of the Cape, though without protection or aid from a government which prides itself upon commercial patronage, and makes annual professions of its zeal for the encouragement of trade. These customs were particularly undeserved, because no government, so much as our own, is required, *ab initio*, to confer protection before it can prefer a claim to obedience.

On the other hand, the merchant despatched his ship with exclusive reliance upon chance or individual hardihood, upon the seas and the winged winds, upon the vague probability of foreign protection, upon any thing but the natural guaranties and assurances of his own government. The merchantman was fitted with a picked crew, armed to the teeth, and made capable, by all expedients, of enduring every assault of men or the elements, precisely as if the expedition had been purposely sent forth in bravado, “to take the measure of Presbyter John’s foot, or pluck a hair from the great Khan’s beard ;” and the Straits of Sunda were dreaded on shipboard and on ‘Change, as Circe’s promontory by the wandering Ulysses.

Now certainly no urgent reason exists, unless it should be furnished by their own barbarian caprice, for the black-toothed king of Cochin-China, his majesty of Siam, or the bandit, self-elected Pasha of Mocha, to take much pains to find out what we are doing in this far-off republic, *toto divisi orbe*, as “shark’s fins, snake skins, and carcasses of tigers,” are just now in no very great estimation in our prices current. But surely it is of essential importance, that our government should manifest to these great men, that we are really *hijos d’Alguno*, albeit we reside so very far from the centre of the universe, and visit them only from time to time “to get a little tea to keep us from starving.”

Immediately after the peace of 1783 had settled the point, that the mother country should not supply our tea-market, two ships were despatched to Canton, which in due season returned with full cargoes of the once condemned article. This may be assumed as the commencement of the American trade with China ; and it has gone on steadily increasing from year to year, until our traffic at the single port of Canton is estimated by Mr. Roberts at the enormous amount of more than eight millions annually.

That our Executive, meanwhile, has not entered into an alliance offensive and defensive with the angelic dynasty of Peking is with us no matter of complaint. If that super-human court, in the plenitude of its august self-complacency, steadily refuses all intercourse with its nearer neighbours, it is not in reason to be expected, that it should place itself upon a footing of intimacy with us, its very antipodes. The science of protocoling is essentially Chinese ; and, if France

and Great Britain, the very hotbeds of modern diplomacy, can, after all, make no treaty with the Celestials, it is in vain for us plain, blunt, downright republicans, who presume to loll upon our chairs and masticate tobacco, even in the majestic presence of Mrs. Trollope and Lieutenant Hamilton, to attempt so much as the preliminaries of a conference, with a party so essentially inapproachable.

Nor will we complain of what thus equally baffles us and our betters. We cannot help thinking, that much lies behind that curtain of overwrought ceremony which Chinese custom has established, and jealously preserves. Beyond this ridiculous knock-head etiquette, there is something definite and substantial. It is the instinctive feeling of national weakness, the only efficient defence of the realm consisting in a triple array of imposing and exacting abstractions. There is a conviction, that the only preservative from ruin lies in guarding sedulously against the encroachment of familiar habitudes, in establishing a *chevaux-de-frise* of seclusion around the throne, to thrust off the rude eye of rebellion, astounded and awed in its advance by the more than Olympian sanctity of the celestial centre. Thus has grown up a vast and cumbersome system of form and established ceremonial, which, however ridiculous it may appear to even its own more enlightened professors, is nevertheless a true *cordon sanitaire* against a real trial of strength between a more manly energy, and the scanty resources of a worn-out, barbaric despotism. Words, mere words, pompous diction, and blustering bravado, compose the settled policy of the Chinese emperors, to preserve from rebellious encroachment the prerogatives of their power; and a cloistered seclusion from the rest of the nations, with the exception of a single corner of the land, is a chief pivot of the machinery, well constructed under the circumstances, for the preservation of the despotism of China.

And, clearly, the government can never have been otherwise. It is not, and from its structure can never have been, one of the first class of Asiatic nations. But we will not quarrel with it for this. Peaceful and industrious we grant it to be, and to these qualities alone it owes its present existence. The Chinaman is also more than a Scotchman or a Switzer, in his single-hearted attachment to his birthplace, to his native nook of earth. This *amor patriæ*, and the industry of millions, have erected, in olden time, a

wall of stone, instead of arraying a phalanx of steel, against the invasions of the more warlike Tartars ; a strong proof of the antiquity of the present imperial policy, which regards with vainglorious self-complacency the antediluvian institutions of the empire ; assuming that they, being perfect in themselves, are only to be preserved from defilement and change by shutting out all intercourse with the external barbarians of the earth.

But, unfortunately for the interests of the imperial sway, these secrets of its prison-house policy are beginning to leak out. It has been long known, that the outpost champions of the empire are but a species of braggart Major-Sturgeons, who have undergone the tonsure ; and philanthropic and peaceable missionary expeditions, braving the fiercest of the Celestial thunders, have already landed at points of the Eastern coast, of fearful proximity to the very capital itself.

In the year 1832, Mr. Lindsey and Mr. Gutzlaff, in the merchant ship Amherst, containing an assorted cargo of broadcloths, camlets, cotton, and calico goods, made a bold and unceremonious descent upon the eastern coast of the empire, to the astonishment of the population, and the horror and dismay of the Mandarin authority. At Amoy, in the province of Fokien, a great sensation was produced by this new phenomenon. Boarding deputations were despatched in endless succession, to inquire the objects of the expedition, and to convey reiterated commands for the immediate departure of the strange intruders. The Amherst, an unarmed trader, was surrounded with a whole fleet of war-junks, always preserving however a proper offing. Mr. Gutzlaff replied to the repeated edicts and threats of the authorities in a tone of sharp remonstrance ; and they were even less horror-struck at such boldness, than with the formidable circumstance of foreigners speaking their own language, and manifesting so much knowledge of their local institutions and geography. New reinforcements of war-junks continued to arrive at the port ; but, in defiance of these formidable demonstrations, a party from the Amherst determined to land, and penetrate into the town. A force of five hundred troops was found drawn up along the shore, in battle array the most imposing, and the beach, and the adjoining hills, were covered with a dense mass of population. But the invading strangers

met with no opposition to their landing, and were even received to an audience with the authorities of the place, with no more display of hostile intent than the discourteous salutations, of “*Where do you come from?*” “*What business have you here?*” “*You must begone instantly.*”

From this time all was plain sailing with the party, and by a similar exhibition of firmness they counteracted the prohibitions of the Chinese admiral. A junk approaching too near, accidentally fell foul of the Amherst, and, in order to ward off the collision of the two ships, four English sailors jumped on board the junk to cut its cable. This peaceful boarding party cleared the decks of the Chinaman most effectually, every soul on board rushing precipitately below, or jumping overboard. When the real state of the case came to be explained, the Chinese were excessively grateful; but, after this Trafalgar occasion, no Chinese vessel anchored nearer to the Amherst than the distance of half a mile. The Chinese chronology has not reckoned its scores of millenniums altogether in vain; for it has by degrees developed a trace of sovereign intelligence in the popular ranks, manifested in their very palpable reluctance to adhere blindly to the foolish restrictive system of their rulers. They invariably yielded to the adventurers of the Amherst a much more friendly hospitality, than was accorded by the mandarins and imperial placemen.

It is impossible, but so migratory a race, as that of the Chinese traders, should in the end catch some of the prevailing spirit of the time, as impressed upon them by an observation of the modes and opinions of the world without. No country so much as China requires, for the preservation of its peculiar institutions, and we might add for the subsistence of its condensed population, an established system of colonization. But this we suppose would involve, in parliamentary languagè, a violation of the constitution. It would be inconsistent with the narrow, palisaded policy, that confines all of the Chinese race as serfs to the soil, as perpetual fixtures to the centre of the universe. But, in the absence of colonies, based upon a policy like that of the parent state, the redundant population of the empire will wander abroad, and thus expose themselves to the contagion of foreign ideas more enlightened than their own.

We do not say this because we think, after the fashion of the time, at least in some quarters, that Eastern as well as

Western despotism is already undergoing a great change in its essential character, or that a millennial state of earthly government has as yet betokened its approach by any indubitable signs of its daystar in the political horizon. China has probably for cycles of ages continued in nearly the same condition as at present, and one more cycle at least must pass away, before even the commencement of a happier state of things will appear. If a nation may be born in a day, it is not thus suddenly that congenial institutions, principles, knowledge, permanence are created. Barbarism changes into civilization by the faintest and most untraceable shades ; and the arbitrary domestic rule of many popular governments, as disclosed to us in history, differs but in name from the most single-handed of Eastern despots.

In the language of the schoolmen, China is what it is to us solely from the tea trade ; and as, for this traffic, we are already placed upon the footing of the most favored nation, we suppose President Jackson was unwilling that Mr. Roberts should knock heads for the attainment of greater privileges. Hence it was not among the objects of the mission to offer negotiations at Canton or Peking. So far from this was the Chinese view of the case, that the ship containing the American envoy was summarily ordered out of the port of Canton by a Chinese “chop,” purporting “that, as the Peacock was not a merchant vessel, nor a convoy, having on board an unusual number of seamen, cannon, and weapons, she should not, under any pretext, come to anchor and create disturbances.” Accordingly it was decreed *that she should be driven away.**

After all, it seems our Yankee astuteness and sagacity has in general managed to gain more for our interest in China, than the more imposing, but, under the circumstances, most ill-judged policy of the English. On the expiration of the East India Company’s charter, the English cabinet despatched Lord Napier to China, in 1834, to try the experiment of thrusting him upon the Celestials as an officer of diplomatic rank, and by this *coup de main* to secure commercial advan-

* An order of a similar kind was despatched to the Hong merchants, in relation to the squadron under Commodore Kennedy, as given by Dr. Ruschenberger.

tages beyond what are possessed by other nations trading to Canton. The Chinese, meantime, look upon a foreign consul but as the mere commercial chief of his countrymen in their foreign residence ; holding no personal or official privileges or immunities, more than may be claimed by any foreigner, who does not "create disturbances." He is, notwithstanding all this, held responsible for the good behaviour of his fellow residents, as well as for all difficulties and interruptions that occur in the trade between his countrymen and the Chinese.

A small squadron accompanied Lord Napier, to enforce, if necessary, the reception of the new dignitary. But the claim preferred, of superior rank to other superintendents at Canton, was coolly disregarded by the authorities ; and not only this, but when it was pleaded, almost *in ultimâ ratione*, that the English claimant of new honors and privileges was in fact a foreign mandarin, it was replied, that when at home he could not be put down as superior to a Chinese noble of the grade in question, and that after having expatriated himself, and become a stranger and foreigner by the remove, he must content himself with the barren and somewhat equivocal honor of being styled a barbarian mandarin. To make the matter worse, a present of broadcloths, camlets, and watches had been presented as a *douceur* to the Imperial court. This was received with insulting condescension as a humble tribute from the British king, now the recognised but unrewarded dependent upon the Celestial bounty. No privileges were conceded for this humiliation, and the noble aspirant to diplomatic honors remained housed at Canton, unhonored, unfeasted, and unsung. Lord Napier began at length to grow restive, and once for all burst into a storm of indignant fury. But his Excellency, Governor Loo, took the matter very coolly, issuing an edict of expulsion to the British envoy, and cutting off the British trade with Canton by a proclamation of the following purport.

"From the period of this proclamation, mercantile people of this inner land are not permitted to buy or sell to the English nation any goods or things whatever, large or small ; and all manner of workmen, boatmen, &c., are also not allowed to receive hire or employ of the said barbarians. Should there be any clandestinely having dealings or receiving hire, let the local officers immediately examine and seize them, to be pun-

ished, according to the law against holding clandestine intercourse with foreign nations. In this the said barbarian eye, Lord Napier, has cut himself off from the celestial empire. It is not all that we the governor and lieutenant-governor have liked to do.

“ Taoukwang, 14th year, 9th moon, 29th day.”

All the Chinese servants instantly departed from the British factory, the natives being forbidden, on pain of death, to sell any provisions to the offending people ; and all foreigners were enjoined to the same non-intercourse under the penalty of incurring the same interdict, as that denounced against the English. Under these unpleasant circumstances, the British envoy felt himself obliged for personal protection to call up a guard of marines from the squadron. But this proved of little benefit ; he was in no danger of being attacked, but what obduracy can withstand the importunities of hunger and thirst ? Lord Napier soon found that fatal necessity must compel his departure, and chagrin and mortification for the humiliating circumstances of his failure soon after ended his days. Yet it is said he was a mild and amiable gentleman, and little deserved the fate thus forced upon him by the mistaken foreign policy of his government.

All this time the American consul at Canton, being unambitious of any distinction, more than that of the superintendency of his country’s trade, continued to be acknowledged by the authorities, and the business of the American factory kept the noiseless tenor of its way.

The Chinese are indeed a singular race, abounding in a strange degree with the palpable obscure both of ignorance and science. They have all the self-complacent vanity of half civilization, and many very startling coincidences in their philosophy and tradition with the profound musings of Greece and Egypt. In what category to place them must much puzzle the psychologist. But there they are, with a chronology which extends so far back into the eternal past that in comparison Chaos and old Night are but events of yesterday, and yet almost destitute of the very elements and outlines of a regular history ; that which they profess to rely upon being but a heterogeneous *olla podrida*, an untraceable *congeries* of incompatible things, in which *nulli sua forma manet* ; with habits of industry and enterprise, which expend themselves upon objects that deteriorate and lessen, rather than

exalt national greatness, — the pedlers and scavengers of the Eastern Sea ; with a religion which, according to Confutzee, is a pure deism, by Taou was interpreted into a sort of pantheism, and by the priest of Fo is made a mere mass of unmeaning ceremonial ; without a tangible hope, even sensual, and thus, without a soul to impart animation, making the paradise of its desire to consist in a wild metempsychosis, which terminates at last in the very desirable goal of annihilation ; and, to crown the whole, with a despotism unlimited and all-exacting, but which domineers over its subjects without a shadow of the means of power, but that of a system of absurd and exorbitant etiquette, all which a Chinese Napoleon would burst through by a single volition, and, give him but the good help of one squadron of the “old guard,” annihilate for ever the degenerate dynasty of the Tartar conquerors.

For ourselves, we think it is time we should cease to denominate the Chinese the glory of the Asiatic race, merely because they boast to have produced a sort of barbarian Plato some hundreds of years before the Christian era, shave their heads to ape the baldness of wisdom, print by means of embossed blocks of wood, in no better artistical style than that of the ancient Peruvians, and have a fashion of instructing their youth in crude, unnatural monstrosities, and in poems which, to hear, would have made Hafiz and Sadi break their lyres, in a fit of epilepsy.

In the absence of all other means of power to sustain the imperial sway of the Celestial monarch, Mr. Roberts considers the Chinese code of literary instruction the very pivot upon which all the machinery of the dynasty turns for its preservation ; and this, by its constituting a sort of literary aristocracy as a safeguard to the throne.

“ High rank in the state is the brightest glory to which these people aspire ; with them learning derives its chief value from the simple fact, that it brings them within the reach of that dazzling prize. Strict examinations, regulated by a fixed code of laws, have been instituted, and designed solely to elicit from the body of the community the ‘*true talent*’ of the people, with the ulterior intention of applying it to purposes of government. At these examinations, which are open to all, except menial servants, lictors, players, and priests, it is determined who shall rise to distinction and shed glory on their ancestors, and posterity ; who shall live on in obscurity and die and be forgotten. The competitors of the Olympic games never entered the

arena, before the assembled thousands of their countrymen, with deeper emotion, than that which agitates the bosoms of those, who contest the palm of these literary combats."

These struggles with wild beasts at Ephesus consist, according to Mr. Roberts, of successive trials of skill, by dissertations written, from subjects in the "four books" and "the five classics," on poetry, history (confined to the centre of the universe, of course), and political economy. This is all well enough; but the style of getting up of these juvenile essays must be in the highest finish of celestial calligraphy, which seems after all, according to our author, to be the principal point aimed at.

"The paper on which the themes are written is prepared with great care. It is firm and thick, and the only kind that may be used. The price of it is fixed by authority. The number of characters both in the themes and essays is limited. The lines must be straight, and all the characters full and fair. At the close of every paper containing elegant compositions, verses, or answers to questions, it must be stated by the students how many characters have been blotted out or altered; if the number exceed one hundred, the writer is 'pasted out' or rejected."

Hence it seems, after all, that a professor of penmanship would stand the highest chance of being made secretary of state. Alas! how few of our great men would stand the smallest chance of political elevation in China. We Americans have been accused of adoring the outward, though never we believe to an extent like this; but *chacun à son gout*.

To return to the embassy. Its true business commenced in the bay of Turan, in Cochin-China, a sort of Pelion or Ossa to the high Olympus of the Celestials. The objects of the embassy were proposed to the boarding officer from Vunglam, who, according to Mr. Roberts, "appeared a little only superior to the fishermen who brought him off." The proposition seems to have been to proceed forthwith to Tué, the residence of the king of that part of the peninsula of Malacca, in order to negotiate a commercial treaty with his Cochin-Chinese majesty. But, as London imports its fashions and polite usages from Paris, and our great cities from both, so it seems that Cochin-Chinese ceremonial is, in a second-hand form, the same Tartar wall to international intercourse as among the Chinese themselves. The ragged boarding officer

forwarded a note from Mr. Roberts to whomsoever it might concern, stating the object of the embassy, the armament of the Peacock, the name of the envoy, and by whom sent. After some days, as the Cochin-Chinese never allow themselves to be unreasonably perturbed by doing business in a hurry, two mandarins arrived from the royal capital, between whom and the American envoy the preliminaries of the mission began immediately to be discussed. In the conduct and expressed opinions of these two emissaries of the minister of foreign affairs, there is a singular and even ludicrous mixture of loyal zeal, native shrewdness, and innocent, unsophisticated ignorance. They were evidently the mere tools and subaltern agents of the jealous and astonished court of Tué. They were horror-struck at the idea of the American envoy's addressing their king personally, though the proposition was perfectly natural in Mr. Roberts ; for who would think of a minister of foreign affairs in Cochin-China ? It was required by these mandarins, that the style of addressing this minister should be lowly and ceremonious, much beyond what the cabinet at Washington allows in its intercourse with foreign potentates ; not to mention, that the military single-mindedness of Mr. Roberts's great patron, General Jackson, was to be taken into consideration.

But the verbal criticism expended upon the President's letter was such as to throw all Grub Street into the shade, and absolutely drive reviewers to despair. The proposed substitutions so perverted the original meaning, and were so humiliating in their form and expression, that we fancy to ourselves the great queller of savages starting from the perusal of Mr. Roberts's journal and calling for sword and charger.

But not the flute of Aristoxenus and the lyre of Timotheus were in better accord, than the stern national pride of the American envoy and the unbending firmness of his employer. Mr. Roberts steadily refused a single letter of abasement, a single cringe of ceremonial, even to attain the best advantages of the reciprocity system ; and, in various parts of his book, he hesitates not to give utterance to the loathings of his soul at those, who

“Crawl from the cradle to the grave,
Slaves — nay, the bondmen of a slave.”

Crawling upon all fours seems the *pas seul* in Cochin-China and Siam. Thus the premier crawls into the presence

of his sovereign ; the secretary crawls into the presence of the premier, "with his black paper slate and pencil" ; the messenger crawls into the presence of the secretary, and the servant crawls into the presence of the messenger. One might imagine these distant Asiatics a species of human crab, particularly as they crawl equally well both forward and backward, always keeping "what seems the head" steadily directed towards the liege authority for the time being.

The negotiations at Vunglam terminated, as have terminated all previous embassies to these savages of the Orient, in an irreconcilable dispute about forms. But Mr. Roberts should be permitted to speak for himself.

"The deputy now urged the necessity of proper regard being paid to the elevation of the words, *Emperor*, *Cochin-China*, &c., and to the use of '*humble and decorous expressions*.' To this advice he endeavoured to give greater force, by saying, that, in the correspondence held by the kings of An-nam before the assumption of the present title of emperor, such humble phraseology was made use of. This argument would imply inferiority in the President to one who bears the high title of Emperor, and therefore was instantly repelled as insulting. The deputy denied its being insulting, maintained the propriety of his argument, and insisted on the use, at the commencement of the President's letters, of one or the other of the derogatory terms already mentioned, viz., that the letter was sent with '*silent awe*,' or that it was presented with '*uplifted hands*.' He was admonished not to repeat so insulting a demand, for that the President stands on a footing of perfect equality with the highest emperor, and cannot therefore use any term, that may make him appear in the light of one inferior to the king of *Cochin-China*."

As the American Indian, when in his native and undisturbed state, breathes only war and revenge, and the Malay finds all his social happiness upon the facilities afforded him of violating the eighth commandment, so it seems all the ambition of the Chinese races is limited to an exact adherence to formulas of prescribed etiquette. This is the genius of the people and their bane. The schoolmaster, rare penman though he be, may range abroad at will, without effecting great results among such a people. Their instinct looks back from advancement. They peer too much into the past, to ages before Inachus, for the ideal excellence of human nature.

"Westward the course of empire takes its way," might well have been exclaimed by Mr. Roberts, on his arrival at Siam, where, notwithstanding much knocking of heads and prostration upon nine members, as Hadji Baba would say,—all made the theme of much indignant remark by the American envoy,—the offers of commercial reciprocity were cordially received without altercation, and the ambassador from the distant West was received with polite attentions to his comfort, to which he had been an entire stranger, while his visit was confined to the farther East.

But, however it might be the custom of our envoy to put himself upon his reserved rights, when the ceremonial required of him was of a nature to compromise the dignity of his government, he was not so much the mere fool of form and buckram as to forego the prospect of real advantages for lack of yielding a point sometimes to gain his object, particularly when it was a mere affair of putting on or taking off of shoes; and he even stooped much at times from the loftiness of his American pride, to accommodate the details of his mission to the usages of Oriental etiquette; but this underplot, though seemingly puerile in its mere enactment, was nevertheless entirely in character with the Dorian method of the main performance. When the ratifications of the treaty with Siam were to be exchanged, a procession was formed of the officers of the squadron, headed by Mr. Roberts, and preceded by the ship's band, and, in this pomp and display of the battalion, the treaty was borne in a box by two officers to the banks of the river Meinam, and here, says Dr. Ruschenberger,

"Mr. Roberts took the treaty in his hand, and, after holding it up above his head in token of respect, delivered it to a Siamese officer. He also held it above his head, and then, shaded by a royal umbrella borne by a slave, passed it into the boat, where it was received upon an ornamented stand, and, after covering it with a cone of gilt paper, it was placed beneath the canopy. At this moment our band ceased, and that of the Siamese began to play. The canoe shoved off, and we turned our steps homeward to the merry tune of Yankee Doodle."—
pp. 319, 320.

This was quite a scene for the Champs Elysées, or the Castle Garden of our *fête*-loving brethren of New-York; but listen to what Dr. Ruschenberger says of the audience ceremony with the magnificent king of Siam.

"His Majesty, a plump, fat man of about fifty, sat, like the god Boudah, cross-legged upon his throne, enveloped in a rich mantle of gold tissue, chewing betel, and squirting saliva into a golden urn. Numerous attendants prepared his betel, and with large fans circulated the air about his Majestic Obesity, as he sat in the pomp and circumstance of state.*** The floor was covered by nobles, courtiers, and magnates of the land, in silk and gold costume. There were several Arabs and Persians present, in rich Cashmere shawl turbans, contrasting their splendid statures with the squat forms of the Siamese.*** Perhaps three hundred individuals composed this goodly company, every one crouching upon his knees and elbows, and the head bent upon the ground." — p. 322.

Into this presence of the cud-chewing court of his Majesty, Mr. Roberts and the American officers walked erect, removing their hats as they advanced, and making three bows, as had been stipulated beforehand. They then sat down upon the carpet, at a distance from the king, carefully turning their feet, or rather boots, behind them. As it seems, to uncover the extreme nethermost is the reigning mode of showing respect at Siam, and as Mr. Roberts had given in his downright refusal to make his pilgrimage barefoot, it was arranged that the shoes and boots of the recipients should be industriously concealed, as much as possible, from his Majesty's observance.

"Previous to his audience with the king, in 1833," says Dr. Ruschenberger, "when negotiating the treaty which was now being concluded, Mr. Roberts positively refused to take off his shoes to enter the presence, except on the condition that he should keep on his hat. After a great deal of discussion, the condition was agreed to, and he was the first foreigner, who, with his shoes on, saw his Majesty of Siam.

"After being seated in this novel and therefore somewhat uncomfortable position, they [the American officers] made three Siamese salaams, and the whole court knocked their heads three times on the ground; and his Majesty expressed his satisfaction by squirting saliva into the golden spittoon, and renewing his quid of betel and areca nut." — p. 333.

We beg that our cousins across the water will not misunderstand this negotiation, and suppose that it is an underhand way of rooting them out of India.* They may rest assured

* We throw in the caution, because we remember, not many months ago, to have met with an account of a night's discussion in the English House

that we have not the remotest idea of seducing the fealty of a single subject of their vast, and we hope profitable, realm beyond the Indus. A reciprocal commerce with Siam is certainly desirable, however slight may be the addition it makes to our foreign trade ; though it cannot be but well known, that Siam is not Tyre, nor are its merchants the honorable of the earth. If we do not widely err in our conceptions of this traffic, the chief mercantile imports into our land, direct from Siam, have been as yet but the Siamese Twins, of whose anomalous configuration, they as well as ourselves have enjoyed the pecuniary as well as scientific benefit.

But, however meagre may be the present avails of this petty traffic upon a barbarous coast, its accidental and merely possible advantages, in times anterior to the treaty, were, according to Mr. Roberts, nearly all swallowed up by exorbitant exactions in the form of charges, both stated and discretionary, upon American vessels engaged in the trade,—charges which were not confined to the single enormities of the custom-house, but extended to extraordinary retaining fees, in order to purchase grace and favor from the king, and exemption from petty insult and vexation on the part of the royal servants. These exactions were reckoned at the enormous amount of thirty thousand dollars upon an import cargo of forty thousand dollars ; by which it would seem, that his Majesty of Siam, or his placemen in the commerce department, were doing a rather thrifty business with the straggling waifs, that floated to that coast. But the king being committed, we suppose, to no preconceived system of commercial regulation, on yielding to the good diplomacy of the American envoy, consented to give up his profitable tariff of peculation, and forego all its lucrative transactions, for the single stipulation “of 1700 ticuls, a Siamese fathom, upon the

of Commons, upon the motion of a patriot, it is true, of the extreme *gauche*, to call for information as to the ambitious designs of the United States in regard to much North American territory, as well as to the intrusive and unmanly encroachment of that power upon the rights of Great Britain, by its late treaties with Siam and Muscat ! This throws light upon an account, given by Dr. Ruschenberger, of the kindly representations to the Sultan of Muscat, made by a British functionary of Bombay, as to the very inconsiderable consequences that could result to him from a treaty with so distant, and withal so powerless, a nation as the United States. The Sultan very sharply rejoined, that he saw ten American vessels in his harbours to one English vessel, and, as the Americans had twice beaten the English, he inferred they could not be so very insignificant after all.

breadth of vessels bringing merchandise ; " thus reducing all the duties to be paid, together with the port charges, to a ninth of former sums. We can do no less than exclaim with Edgar, " The prince of darkness is a gentleman."

To their accounts of the different negotiations, both our authors have subjoined some very sensible remarks upon the pressing necessity of protecting our commerce in the Eastern Seas. There has certainly been hitherto a strange remissness in this respect, on the part of the government. Furnished with such a navy as ours, and for which we, as a peaceful, neutral people, given up wholly to utilitarianism and filthy lucre, have so little employment ; while our docks are crowded with " lofty ships," and our navy list is filled to overflowing with crowds of gallant and aspiring officers waiting orders, it is indeed strange, that a cruising ground is not allowed, where it is so necessary, in the longitudes of the Indian ocean, and about the maritime domain of the pirates of Malacca. That there are great American interests requiring protection in the Indian seas, is apparent enough from the bare statement of the fact, that there are ten millions of American property annually exposed upon the high seas, and in the long range of harbours, eastward of the Cape of Good Hope ; that this amount is every year increasing ; and that piracy upon the ocean, and upon every barbarous coast throughout all the islands, is a most characteristic feature of the native propensity. Before the affair of Quallah Battu, no report of a similar act of high-handed aggression upon our undefended commerce had resounded in tones of alarm through our commercial community. That matter was avenged by the Potomac, in strict accordance with established maxims of civilized intercourse with the Indies, by confounding together both the innocent and the guilty ; though, in this instance at least, there was no other way left of making an example of punishment, if that was to be done. But who can enumerate all the acts of extortion and plunder committed upon solitary ships, to an extent insufficient to awaken the national feeling, and arouse the tardy sympathy of the government ; — the risk, expense, and uncertainty of a voyage amidst such dangers, as render the escape from destruction an accident of remarkable fortune ; and, more than all, the exposure of our commerce to unauthorized and official depredation, practised in the ports themselves, upon whatever is unprotected and at

their mercy, by the marauding plunderers of the coast, and the graceless functionaries of the custom-house? We have also an annual fleet of a hundred sail of whale ships in the Pacific, the operations of which extend to the coast of Japan, rendering them liable to be wrecked upon the islands and reefs of the great Eastern Archipelago, and the crews to be murdered outright, or made slaves until a ransom is paid, which has hitherto been done by some humane merchantman or foreign ship of war. Desperate indeed would be the hope of such captives, if their deliverance depended solely upon the tardy and accidental arrival of an American ship of war, returning home from the Pacific, showing her top-sails only to the anxious and half-maddened sufferers, and then passing out of the horizon like some pleasing, hopeless phantasm of a sick man's dream. These ships, ordered home from the Pacific by way of the Cape of Good Hope, usually touch only at Manilla or Batavia for refreshments, and depart straightforward on their voyage, scarcely thinking of the commercial interests of their country, in their eagerness, after a three years' absence, to revisit the scenes of their home. This is a partial arrangement of our naval force, that should no longer be made; and we are glad to find, that neither of our authors neglects to remind the Navy Department of this imperious obligation.

The truth is, the government has hitherto conducted itself, in relation to the India trade at least, rather too strictly upon the oft-quoted maxim of letting commerce regulate itself. No encouragement has been given, no protection extended to it. Such a policy was in existence, even when, during the continental system of Napoleon, the American trade to Batavia amounted to nearly five millions annually, by a system of making purchases there of coffee, sugar, and spices, and importing them into France at a clear profit of one hundred per cent. These ships, unprotected even upon their own shores, had to run the gauntlet, this side of the Cape, of the Scilla and Charybdis of the French decrees and the British orders in Council; but, in their long voyage and hazardous operations, they had, we suppose, grown so inured to want of protection, that they repined no more at their fate when captured at either extremity of their route, than does an eel at the destiny to which in a manner he conceives himself born.

The great *entrepôts* of American commerce in the East,

are Calcutta and Canton. But these ports, though enjoying the reputation, without the counting-house, of entirely engrossing the whole American traffic, are nevertheless well known, to those who are admitted into its secrets, to share after all but their proportionate consideration in the general estimate of Eastern trade. The extent of American traffic to the minor ports of the East is much misapprehended, particularly when it is compared with that of the greatest trafficking nations of Europe. In the years 1833 and 1834, there were more than one hundred American vessels, that entered for purposes of traffic into the single port of Batavia, constituting more than one third of the amount of tonnage entered at the custom-house, as compared with that of the Dutch, the owners of the island of Java. The same occurs to a similar extent at Zanzibar, Muscat, and the ports of the Persian Gulf, at Siam, and upon the coasts of the different islands of the Eastern sea. This way-side voyaging is made subsidiary to the furtherance of the main object of the expedition. The *expenses* of an Eastern voyage, aside from its *profits*, are often in a great measure paid by a course of smaller traffic at ports intervening between the great points of import and export. Thus a vessel from Boston to Calcutta, goes first to Rio de Janeiro with a freight partly of specie, but chiefly of naval stores and American produce ; which being converted into specie or goods for the Indian market, she sails directly for Bombay or Calcutta, and makes the usual return of piece goods, silks, opium, and drugs. A vessel for Canton pursues another course. It proceeds to the coasts of the Persian gulf, to Ceylon, to the islands of the Indian Archipelago, or what is more common to Batavia, there exchanging its outward cargo for salt, camphor, tin, opium, indigo, betel-nuts, and edible birds'-nests ; whence it continues its voyage to the China market, to make a profit on this new exchange, and return with a cargo chiefly of tea. We have not ascertained, whether the very profitable freights of cutlery, and of brass and silver, have yet been attempted by American ships, to exchange with the savages upon the coasts of Sumatra and Borneo, directly for their pepper and spices, or indirectly as articles of intermediate exchange, subsidiary to the main traffic with the China market. If Great Britain can make a profit upon such articles of exchange (and she has long continued to do so), there is nothing but

the greater length of the voyage to prevent our deriving a like benefit from the commerce. The chief favor bestowed by government upon foreign trade at Canton, consists in a drawback granted to the importation of rice ; though, in general, the restrictive exactions of the Chinese are scarcely more oppressive toward foreign trade, than the selfish policy of the Anglo-Indian system, or the narrow monopoly of the Dutch at Java.

But let us at length quit these far-off realms, and follow the course of the embassy to Yemen, and the “East of sun-bright Araby.” Here the armament entered the Red Sea, which, by the way, Mr. Roberts says, is not red but green, to Mocha, where the provincial representative of the Turkish Sultan was found to be a bandit deserter from Egypt, rather civil in his manners, but whose history proves him to be little better than one of the wicked ones. Thence the American envoy sailed to Muscat, whose sultan seems the very Bayard of Arab chivalry. He was approached as a barbarian, and discovered, upon nearer intercourse, to be possessed of a polished civilization, such as Louis Philippe himself might well be proud of. Discriminating duties upon American vessels were only mentioned to be annulled, and listen to what follows.

“ When the fifth article of the proposed treaty was read, which related to shipwrecked seamen, he at once objected to that part of it relating to a remuneration for expenses, which would be necessarily incurred in supporting and forwarding them to the United States, and said the articles he wished so altered as to make it incumbent upon him to protect, maintain, and return them to their own country free of every charge. He remarked, that to do otherwise would be contrary to the usages of the Arabs, and to the rights of hospitality which have ever been practised among them.”*

And this king of men is no petty Arab scheick, or impotent Chinese emperor, with scarcely power to preserve his long

* Of a similar tone of high and noble generosity, was the Sultan’s proposition to the American envoy, during the audience of ratification in October, 1835, that the treaty should take effect from the day of its ratification by the President and Senate of the United States, namely, June, 1834, more than a year past ; thus subjecting himself to the repayment of some hundreds of dollars overcharged in the customs, under the continuance of the old state of things. We almost think Mr. Roberts betrayed too much of the mere merchant, in consenting to accept the bestowment of such magnanimous liberality.

queue from the grasp of rude rebellion ; but it seems he dominates over most of the poetic Land of Roses, with a population more than half civilized, and a naval armament which exceeds in respectability that possessed by any but the most maritime and commercial states of Europe. His sultanship seems the very Haroun al Raschid of the Eastern coast of Africa, and we are happy now, after the labors of Mr. Roberts, to joy in him as our commercial ally, offensive and defensive.

This treaty with Muscat is by far the most important attainment of the mission. The foreign trade to the ports of that kingdom is already much in the hands of this country, and is steadily on the increase. Our vessels, it is true, seldom visit Muscat itself ; but it is because most of the foreign commerce of the country (which stretches along a vast extent of the eastern coast of Africa) is carried on through the island of Zanzibar, which may be denominated the great commercial capital of the sultan's dominions. From September, 1832, to May, 1834, there were thirty-two American ships that visited this port, while the entire navigation of Europe was confined to nine vessels during this period. The trade consists in an exchange of American cottons and specie, for gum copal, ivory, and hides. Our cottons have taken precedence in this port, and, in fact, in all places along the Persian Gulf ; and are working their way into the East as they have already done into many ports of the Pacific. Aside from considerations of superior quality in the fabrics themselves, it seems our Yankees beat the old countrymen to nothing, in the knack of hawking off their wares ; telling the honest Orientals, that, dependent as Europe is upon their country for the growth of the raw material, it is not to be supposed but they retain at home all the best of the cotton for their own manufacture !

We are here compelled to part company with our authors, gratefully offering them our acknowledgments for the information, they have so seasonably communicated, of the commercial coasts of the East. Mr. Roberts's book is a plain tale of the events which befell the mission ; the journal of a public man, who writes, in simple, strong conciseness his impressions of events and foreign habitudes, always preserving the duties of his envoyship uppermost in his narrative ; and this with much apparent knowledge of commerce, and in a

perspicuous mode of rendering such knowledge intelligible to the public. No East India merchant or factor should rest content without a perusal, if not a study, of his work. It is eminently professional in its character, and, like all professional books, apt in many parts to be uninteresting to the mere general reader. But what it lacks by the unattractiveness of many of its subjects, and sometimes by the hardness, if not incorrectness of its style, is abundantly made up in the mass of solid and useful information it contains, nautical, mercantile, and diplomatic.

The work of Dr. Ruschenberger is of a somewhat different cast, being constructed from the materials furnished by the wide range of observation afforded in a voyage around the earth. With him, the embassy forms but an episode to the main story of his work ; though he supplies a great store of information, as to the commerce and industry of the Eastern nations. His is the account of all his travel's history,

"of antres vast and deserts idle ;"

of his glowing impressions of Eastern scenery ; of his philosophical reflections upon Asiatic manners and policy ; of the pearl fisheries of Ceylon (he puts in his negative as to the spicy breezes), and of the swampy miasms and ever-varied uncleannesses of Batavia ; of the Parsees of India,* and the Dayak head-hunters of Borneo ; of the half-christianized Sandwich islanders, and the degenerate progeny of Castile at California. He puts to the work a hand trained to authorship ; nor does his style and thought, like that of many of the *litterateurs* of his profession, smack in any degree too much of the quarter-deck ; a species of composition now much in vogue, derived in the first instance from Cooper, and sustained in credit by the popularity of Basil Hall and

* The Parsees of India are one of the finest races of men in the world, demigods and Apollos to the Mahomedan and Hindu castes around them. They are pure representatives of the people of ancient Iran,—the fire-worshipping disciples of Zoroaster. Having confined their intercourse and alliances entirely within the limits of their own tribe, they have continued for centuries to transmit the pure blood of Persia from generation to generation. Nor has the native quickness and fire of their intellect been by degrees subdued, under the ungenial influences of their foreign residence. Almost all the native merchants of Bombay, and of many other ports of British India, are Parsees ; and they constitute the only commercial class of the unmixed Orientals, who can pretend to even a distant rivalry of the Christian residents in intelligence, honor, or comprehensive views of commerce. They are the antipodes of the Pariahs.

Captain Maryatt. For ourselves, we profess never to have received so much information respecting the condition and modes of existence of the maritime Asiatics, from any other source, as from the works now before us.

The pamphlet, whose title we have placed in conjunction with these volumes, contains an enlightened view of our consular system in general, and a special plea, of much pertinence, for the particular establishment of a consular agency throughout the Eastern Seas, for the permanent protection of our commerce in that remote though interesting quarter of the globe. This is to pursue the benefits of the late embassy to good purpose. If, as was said above, our commerce needs protection while yet exposed upon the high seas of the Eastern hemisphere, much more, it may be argued, does it require the appliances of official security, through government agents, upon the coasts of those waters, which are and have been so thronged with our trade.

It were vain to enter into commercial stipulations with such despots of easy honor, unless, after the treaty is made, we keep constantly in their presence the embodied majesty of our power, in the form of its recognised representative. Such an agent, whether regarded as the head man of his nation, or the mere controller of turbulent seamen, is invested, in virtue of his office and station, with that subtle and mysterious influence, great in proportion as the true nature and authority of its powers are less understood, which overawes and controls the short-hand practices of those, whose maxims of traffic are much too often on the *sauve qui peut* principle, as applied to morals. The commercial agent of a foreign nation who is resident in Eastern Asia, whether his presence is really acceptable or not, is still regarded as a commercial chief, who has the right of claiming that justice should be rendered to his people. This demand of the foreign resident is, under the circumstances, as the mandate of a master ; and slaves obey, however they may in secret rebel against the authority which coerces them ; a consideration of much value, in adopting measures for the protection of our Eastern trade.

After the treaties negotiated with Siam and Muscat, commercial residents will of course be speedily appointed to those places. It will at least be utter folly to enter into treaty stipulations with those powers, if the mere exchange of

ratifications is to include all that government designs to perform, in order to the permanent maintenance of the arrangement. Promises and even favors may be freely lavished by barbarians, to be rid of the unpleasant visit of a war-ship, but something more is requisite to sustain a continuance of the stipulated advantages, or the empty breath of words will but be as the furrow left by the keel.

The author we are now considering writes as one who is personally acquainted with his subject; and he has given an outline of what, in his estimation, should be the commercial policy of the United States, in relation to the country east of the Cape of Good Hope. The plan he recommends is the following, which we see no reason in the world to gainsay.

" 1st. Let the countries around the Chinese sea be erected into a consulate-general, Canton being the residence of the presiding officer, who shall also be consul for China.

" 2d. Let the islands subject to the Spanish crown, extending from the Bashee islands to Basilan, be made a second consulate, with residence at Manilla.

" 3d. Let the insular region, lying between the Spanish claims on the north and the Dutch claims on the south, form a third consulate, with residence at the Looloo group or at Borneo city.

" 4th. Let the Dutch islands be a fourth consulate, with residence at Batavia.

" 5th. Let the eastern shore of Sumatra and the Malayan peninsula form a fifth consulate, with residence at Singapore or Rhoio.

" 6. Let Siam be the sixth consulate.

" 7. Let Cochin-China be the seventh and last consulate.

To such of these governments as are independent, the consuls should be duly accredited, and authorized to correspond directly with them, and protected by treaty stipulations. Recognition like this cannot of course be expected from colonial authorities. Let the consuls be required, in addition to their usual duties, to give minute information of their respective countries to the consul-general and the State department. Let it be the duty of the consul-general to collect and arrange this information, and to present it in a digested form, with his further views, to the department. Let him report on the working of the consular system, and thus bring about its extension and perfection. Especially let all naval movements be made only with his concurrence, and no retributive measures re-

solved on but with his express and responsible sanction. The annual cost of this establishment, at \$4000 or \$5000 for the consul-general, and \$3000 for the consuls, with some allowances for interpreters' services and for commercial agents, would be about \$30,000. It is not much for so important a region, on which nothing is expended in diplomatic establishments."

It must, we think, be admitted, that our government has, in commercial affairs, been singularly remiss, in the proper maintenance of its official representation abroad. We speak thus in general terms, because it is not alone in Eastern Asia that the consular establishment of the United States has been heretofore much neglected; in fact, the sin of omission extends in this respect to most, if not all, the more western nations with whom we have commercial intercourse. Instead of its being the legitimate offspring of the government itself, cherished and fostered with zeal and pride, as a powerful safeguard of our prosperity in commerce, of our national honor, and of our country's civilization, it has been but the mere product of accident, left to grow up of itself, unprotected, unnoticed, and even unthought of. Our *diplomatic* service is wretchedly enough provided for; our *consular* establishment is still worse. This may be learned from a report of the Secretary of State, made to the Senate in the year 1833; by which it seems the consular representation of the United States is, so far as the government is concerned, the mere effect of an article in a treaty with France, in 1792, in which, as France has ever regarded consuls as diplomatic officers, a contingency was reserved for the mutual protection and recognised offices of those functionaries. Succeeding events annulled these particular stipulations, with the exception of that which authorizes consuls "to receive protests and declarations, to give copies of acts under the consular seal, to settle the intestate estates of American citizens, to secure property saved from wrecks, to provide for the deposites of ships' papers, and to afford relief to destitute American seamen."

This negative provision for commerce went on, without melioration or more accurate definition, until 1803, when the old enactment was renewed and others added, all studiously vague and unintelligible. It was enacted, that "the specification of certain powers and duties to be performed by consuls

and vice-consuls, shall not be construed to the exclusion of others resulting from the nature of their appointments, or any treaty or convention under which they may act." Mr. Livingston insisted on knowing, and we think with much reason, what these "specifications of certain powers" might be understood to signify; and he urged, that, instead of the old system, so dishonorable to the country, and so particularly degrading to the functionaries in question, of making them to depend for remuneration upon petty fees extorted from the merchant, and petty profits wrung at two and a half per cent. out of the wages of a distressed seaman, the consuls of the United States should be raised to a dignity worthy of the country, by an apportionment from the treasury, sufficient to place them above the necessity of petty exactions, or being compelled to engage in any business unworthy of their rank, and derogatory to the character of the country they represent.

The actual system is certainly disgraceful to the country, and doubly humiliating to the American consul. And the burden of the evil is more immediately oppressive to the latter; for, however stoutly he may deny the fact in public, in his secret soul he is compelled to acknowledge, that he associates on unequal terms with the well-pensioned functionaries of the European powers. The consuls of other nations are raised by their respective governments far above the desire or the necessity of engaging in commerce, and have not received their appointments as a mere means of additional security to their persons and traffic among a foreign, perhaps a barbarian population; not to mention that the American consul has other and more particular additions to his self-abasement, daily arising from the ill-defined and equivocal nature of his employment and powers. The French consul is possessed, in right of his office, of diplomatic privileges and honors. The English consul, though not of ministerial rank, is yet an officer of highly respectable standing under his government, supplied with overflowing emoluments, drawn direct from the treasury of his country. The American consul, on the other hand, is a mere merchant, or mayhap a petty shopkeeper, having his official dignity engrafted upon his private and more substantial business. In these circumstances, he is either pinched in his means of support, and thus tempted to extortion in his transactions with those who require his protection; or, revelling in wealth, and wholly absorbed in the

affairs of an immense counting-house, he looks upon the duties of his office as trifles beneath his attention, if he can, amidst a foreign insurrection, hoist his national flag over the otherwise totally useless abode of the consulate.

To return to the matters before us. We look to some salutary reform in our consular system in general, when such an establishment has been extended to the Eastern seas. It is of little use, *haud inexperti loquimur*, for the President to despatch commissions to the Indies, constituting new commercial agents in that clime, when no reasonable hope of reward is held forth, to actuate the zeal of these *employés*, or even give a dignity and substance to their office. Whatever may be said of disinterested patriotism, men act in such affairs as in the commonest occurrences of life. A Yankee, able to thrive anywhere, a cotton-planter of Carolina, or a wild-wood tenant of the West, will scarcely expatriate himself to dwell in Canton or Singapore, for the miserable pittances arising from consular and debenture certificates, and five per cent. out of the effects contained in the half-filled chest of a defunct seaman. The American already abroad may accept the appointment as subsidiary to his main employment; but he will take good care, that his time and labor are not inordinately diverted from his proper business, to be engrossed by the cares of his half-paid dignity. He toils and struggles in his foreign abode, dissatisfied, perhaps even to loathing, with the scene around him, and consoled only by the hope of one day being enabled to retire upon wealth or competency to the sojourn of his youth; and, even when perishing under the insalubrious skies of his temporary abode,

“Dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos.”

He, therefore, unless better rewarded by his government, cannot be expected to devote his whole time and talents to the interests of his country, however they may, from circumstances, require his undivided attention. It is not the fault of the officer, but of the system, of which, if bound by necessity to its demands, he is rather the victim than the pensionary. We commend the sentiments of the pamphlet before us to all our readers.
